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PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS.

Amendment to quarantine regulations.

CIRCULAR.

[Department Circular No. 14, 1908. Bureau of Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, March 4, 1908.

To National, State, and local quarantine officers, collectors of customs, shipowners and agents, and others concerned:

Paragraph 68 (c), quarantine regulations of 1903, as previously amended, is hereby changed to read as follows:

Paragraph 68 (c): If arriving at a port south of the southern boundary of Maryland in the season of close quarantine, April 1 to November 1, directly or via a northern port, from a tropical American port, unless said port is known to be free from yellow fever.

The effect of this amendment is to cause the close quarantine season to begin April 1 instead of March 15, with regard to vessels from ports known or suspected of being infected with yellow fever, and arriving at southern ports, either direct or via northern ports.

GEO. B. CORTELYOU,
Secretary.

REQUEST FOR FLEAS FOR IDENTIFICATION, AND FOR INFORMATION RELATIVE TO LOCAL SPECIES OF FLEAS, RATS, AND MICE.

To officers of the Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service, health officers, and physicians:

Reference has previously been made in the Public Health Reports (December 13, 1907, p. 1799) to the investigations of the British Plague Commission in India. These investigations have established the fact that plague may be transmitted from one animal to another by means of the flea; and it appears that this is the common method of transmission of plague among animals, and from them to man. The species most used in the experiments of the commission is the common Indian rat flea, known as *Pulex cheopis*. This flea appears to be identical with the common rat fleas found in Australia and the Philippine Islands, known in the former country as *Pulex palidus*, in the latter as *Pulex philippinensis*.

The transmission of plague is a subject of much importance at the present time, and knowledge of the species of rats and fleas in the

ports of the United States should be extended. In view of these facts a letter was, on February 15, 1907, addressed to the medical officers of the Service on duty at the Pacific ports, instructing them to make investigations for the purpose of determining the different species of rats and fleas to be found in those ports. Many specimens of fleas have been forwarded to the Bureau for identification, some of which were found to be *Pulex pallidus*.

It is now desired to extend the investigations to other places in the United States, and you are invited to cooperate with the Bureau by furnishing such information as you may have or may be able to obtain respecting the species of fleas, rats, and mice found in your respective localities, and especially to secure and forward to the hygienic laboratory of the Service specimens of fleas for identification. Reports of these examinations will be made to the persons forwarding the specimens.

Directions for collecting and forwarding fleas.

1. Collect all specimens in small vials of alcohol, using no cotton within the vial. Take especial care that each vial represents but a single host species, and is accompanied by full data—host, locality, and collector. Fleas should be collected immediately after the death of the host. Sometimes, if the host animal be small, much time may be saved by immersing it slowly in water, driving the fleas to one extremity, a last sudden dip throwing them off upon the surface of the water, from which they may be easily gathered.

2. Exact determinations should each time be made of the host. If anyone engaged in these investigations is not familiar with the species and varieties of the common rats and mice, he should first of all collect two specimens in alcohol of each form of rats and mice, number each lot, and send one series to the Director, Hygienic Laboratory, Washington, D. C., for determinations, retaining the duplicate specimens for comparison. By this simple procedure all hosts may be definitely and accurately cited. It is not sufficient to record the hosts simply as "rats" and "mice." Packages sent by mail should be packed to comply with the postal regulations.

3. Probably the most important collections of fleas that can now be made are of those species actually found upon plague or leprosy patients, or upon lower classes of human beings in the more sordid surroundings, especially near wharves and docks.

UNITED STATES.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General, Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Reports from San Francisco, Cal.—Campaign against plague—Plague-prevention work at Oakland, Point Richmond, and Emeryville, Cal.

Passed Assistant Surgeon Blue reports, February 27:

A telegram, as follows, was sent by me to the Bureau February 26, 1908:

The funds raised by citizens' health committee to carry on sanitary campaign are now available. Two hundred more men have been employed to